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ABSTRACT

Although teachers and administrators have been treated as subject matter for numerous major reports on American education, seldom have they been asked to analyze their own situation and to propose their own solutions. This report presents the observations and recommendations of the Select Seminar on Teacher Evaluation comprised of 9 master teachers and 9 competent administrators from 18 school districts near Albany, New York. While individuals expressed some disagreement after the five-day seminar, a surprising amount of consensus was reached. Eight observations are presented: (1) teachers are undervalued, enjoying minimal financial or other rewards; (2) most current teacher evaluation practices are ineffective; (3) the public is generally uninformed about evaluation practices; (4) evaluation is often an adversarial process; (5) some evaluators may be unqualified; (6) evaluation time and resources are inadequate; (7) evaluation practices vary by district; and (8) each district needs a set of shared beliefs. Recommendations to districts include: (1) establishing plans for improving teacher compensation; (2) reexamining and changing current evaluation practices; (3) putting value into evaluations; (4) improving data collection; (5) enabling teachers to assume peer review and major evaluation responsibilities; (6) differentiating evaluation through career steps; (7) systematically determining policy effectiveness; and (8) allocating at least 3 percent of the district budget for staff development. (MLH)

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A View from the Inside

Report of The Select Seminar on Teacher Evaluation

January, 1986

Sponsored by:
The Capital Area School Development Association and
The Evaluation Consortium, School of Education,
State University of New York at Albany

The Greater Capital Region Teacher Center

DEDICATION

This report is dedicated in memory of Dr. Edward Kelly, valued friend and colleague of all of us who participated in the Select Seminar. The guiding principle underlying the work reflected in this report is his belief that consciously competent, dedicated teachers and administrators are the best arbiters of educational practice.

PREFACE

Since 1985 at least eight major reports have been issued on the state of American primary and secondary education. These reports have been written by observers of primary and secondary education. Those who currently work from day-to-day in the schools have typically been treated as the subject matter for these external observers. They have been categorized, interrogated, diagnosed and dissected by these occasional visitors to the public school, who have then offered their solutions.

Seldom, however, have those who work in schools on a daily basis been asked to analyze their own situation and to propose their own solutions. The seminar on which this report is based resulted from bringing together competent teachers and competent administrators to analyze teacher evaluation from the inside. The ideas in this report were generated by those who actually conduct evaluations of teaching and those who are actually evaluated.

Nine teachers and nine administrators took part in this seminar. Each was invited not because of any special expertise in teacher evaluation, but because of a local reputation for being thoughtful, articulate, and successful. Participants were asked to reflect on their own experiences, the experiences of their colleagues, their professional reading, and their own best judgments about the processes and practices of teacher evaluation.

Seminars were carried on during five days, but the days were not consecutive. Seminar sessions were about two weeks apart, so individuals could think and discuss between sessions. During part of each seminar day members were divided into sub-groups and during part of each day everyone came together for discussion. Individuals didn't agree on everything at the end of five days, but a surprising amount of consensus was reached.

We think that this report of the Select Seminar should be considered from two perspectives. First, we hope you give careful thought to what this group of educators has to say about teacher evaluation as they consider both problems and action steps. Second, please give serious consideration to the premise that those who work in our schools on a day-to-day basis have much to tell us about the educational enterprise. All we have to do is to provide a forum and to listen carefully.

This report presents the observations and recommendations of The Select Seminar on Teacher Evaluation. The Seminar can best be described as a five-day structured conversation among nine master teachers and nine school administrators on the subject of teacher evaluation. The teachers and administrators came from eighteen school districts near Albany, New York, and its meetings took place between February and April, 1985. Its membership represented over 400 years of classroom experience. The Seminar included:

Gregory Aidala, Principal, Chatham Middle School
Richard Behrens, Principal, Schuylerville Jr. Sr. High School
James Butterworth, Principal, Maple Hill High School, Schodack
James Collins, Principal, Duanesburg Jr. Sr. High School
Kevin Cothren, Teacher, New Paltz Central Schools
Peter Griffin, Principal, Voorheesville High School
Dorothy Jacobson, Teacher, Doyle Middle School, Troy
Jeanne Jacobson, Principal, Hebrew Academy of the Capital District
Iona Johnston, Principal, Waterford Elementary School
Robert Jones, Teacher, Queensbury Central School District

Ruth Kellogg, Assistant Superintendent, Scotia-Glenville Central School District
Kevin McCann, Teacher, East Greenbush High School
Roger Quackenbush, Teacher, Bethlehem High School
Fran Seibert, Teacher, Ballston Spa High School
Miriam Smith, Teacher, Onteora High School
Lillian Turner, Teacher, Niskayuna High School
Grace Walter, Teacher, Saratoga Springs High School
Naomi Woolsey, Teacher, Burnt Hills-Ballston Lake Jr. High School

Seminar Coordinators:

Nelson Armlin, Associate Director of the Capital Area School Development Association and Acting Director of the Institute for School Development
Richard Clark, Professor in the Department of Educational Psychology at SUNY-Albany
Edward Kelly, Director of The Evaluation Consortium at Albany

Graduate Assistants-State University of New York at Albany:

Judy Kaufman, Department of Educational Psychology
Louise Lincoln, Department of Educational Administration and Policy Studies
Susan Benati, The Evaluation Consortium at Albany

All seminar sessions were tape recorded and transcribed. In addition, participants prepared written position papers. All of the ideas, conclusions, and recommendations in this document are the result of collaborative or individual contributions by seminar members.

This report presents a summary of the work of the Seminar. A more inclusive document is being published as "Notebook: Work of The Select Seminar on Teacher Evaluation."

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INTRODUCTION

A profession, according to Webster's Dictionary, is "a calling requiring specialized knowledge and often long and intensive preparation including instruction in skills and methods as well as in the scientific, historical, or scholarly principles underlying such skills and methods, maintaining by force of organization or concerted opinion high standards of achievement and conduct, and committing its members to continued study and to a kind of work which has for its prime purpose the rendering of a public service." This definition applies to teaching; it is to this standard that teachers aspire and by which they wish to be recognized.

"I am a professional teacher, and I demand to be treated professionally."

In any other profession, maintaining high standards requires evaluation of practice. One difficulty with evaluating teaching resides in the fact that nearly everyone has been taught by teachers for at least eleven years (from age 5 to 16). Everyone assumes, therefore, that he or she knows how the profession should be practiced. Many believe that teaching is easy, since to the non-educator most effective teaching appears effortless. This situation creates unique pressures for teachers. In part because of this, diverse interest groups, professional associations, teachers being evaluated, and the evaluators themselves often must work out evaluation policy and practice in an adversarial environment.

In order to maintain the high standards of achievement and conduct typifying professionals, evaluation of teaching practices is necessary. Although current research findings provide an incomplete picture of effective teaching, meaningful teacher evaluation can occur when agreed-upon criteria are established by school districts. For example, a school district may decide that a particular teaching model best reflects local goals and practices. After appropriate training in the model, teachers can be evaluated on the criteria inherent in that model.

"Evaluation is not a spare-time activity."

Not only must criteria for evaluation be established, but the credibility of evaluators must be assured. A credible evaluator would demonstrate effective interpersonal classroom management skills, subject-area mastery, pedagogical knowledge, and an understanding of child and adolescent psychology. Many evaluators do not meet these criteria.

Current evaluation practice needs reassessment. Generally, pre-service student teachers are inadequately evaluated. Probationary or tenured teachers as well lack constructive evaluation. Furthermore, the evaluation needs of professionals must be differentiated to reflect the individual's needs at different stages of career development. Such differentiation will help insure that high professional standards are maintained throughout all levels of the teaching profession.

The collective wisdom of more than 400 years of demonstrably effective teaching experience produced a set of observations describing the current state of affairs in our public and private schools with respect to how teachers are evaluated. These observations form the first major section of this report of The Select Seminar on Teacher Evaluation. Nine observations are presented and each is followed by a set of comments that illustrate or support the observation.

The observations and comments offered here might well be considered findings in a research setting. They are the result of deliberation and discussion on the part of The Select Seminar on Teacher Evaluation and form the basis for a set of recommendations. In some instances, several observations relate to a single recommendation.

The second major section of the report presents eight policy and practice recommendations that the Seminar agreed were essential for the improvement and professionalization of the evaluation of teachers in our State. Each recommendation is followed by an explanation and a specific set of actions which the Seminar believed would bring about necessary changes.

This seminar, desiring to tap the expertise of its professionals to the fullest, arranged for them to be together for long time spans in a setting conducive to productive conversations. The conversations were structured using the input of the participants, delineating the tasks and several approaches to the task from which those appropriate were chosen. Agreement was not reached on every point, as our notebook will attest. But consensus in major areas was achieved. The members of the Seminar were unanimous in their belief that the process of structured conversation with time and resources provided for it allowed effective group deliberation with significant results. The process we describe in our recommendations about teacher evaluation is the process we used to reach those recommendations.

OBSERVATIONS

I. Teachers are undervalued. Much is demanded of teachers but little is given in return in salary, in community recognition, or in creating conditions that would make teaching more professionally rewarding. Most teachers are given positive evaluations, but even these positive evaluations are not rewarding. Positive evaluations seldom result in higher salaries or in meaningful professional growth or recognition.

COMMENTS:

. . . Superior teachers would like their special efforts recognized in material ways, but the first need is better pay for ALL teachers.

"Some teachers are better teachers than others. Shouldn't that difference be reflected in rewards?"

. . . Merit pay systems often lead to resentment and distrust and are viewed by teachers as an inadequate means for rewarding superior teachers. Often the amount of money allocated through merit systems is so small as to be almost insulting. Yet superior teachers should be rewarded. Since they are highly self-motivated, superior teachers take pride in doing a good job, and they seek self-improvement. They rely more on self-evaluations than on the evaluation of others. At the same time, they welcome external confirmation of their worth. Although increased salaries for all teachers are essential, money is not the only professional reward teachers seek.

. . . Many superior teachers want to stay in the classroom, but they would welcome meaningful ways to assist novice teachers and peers. They are uniquely qualified to fill roles in orienting new teachers, in engaging in peer evaluation, and in modeling teaching behavior. Teachers who accept these responsibilities should receive adequate financial compensation as well as support in professional development activities.

II. Most current teacher evaluation practices are ineffective. Evaluations as now carried on usually do not capture quality and do not contribute to teacher growth.

"I've been observed lots of times—the evaluations have been very nice... I don't believe that any child has benefited in any way as a result of my evaluations."

COMMENTS:

. . . Current evaluation systems seem to be designed to identify incompetent teachers. However, they don't work well even for this limited purpose. Few teachers are eliminated from the profession on the basis of assessments of teaching. Although most teachers are competent and want to be better, few current evaluation practices help competent teachers be better. Teachers would welcome a system of teacher evaluation which helped them improve performance, were this system conducted by peers or administrators not looking for reasons to discipline.

. . . Many teachers are evaluated infrequently, no more than once a year or less, with observations no longer than a class period. Pre-conferences are usually perfunctory, if they are held at all. Feedback is often general; few specific suggestions are made concerning how teaching might be improved.

. . . Teachers are often evaluated on factors that do not bear on effective teaching such as bulletin boards, the height of window shades, or the neatness of lesson plans. Teachers do not view such evaluations as relevant to effective classroom performance that enhances the teaching-learning process.

. . . Teachers are responsible for certain elements of non-teaching behavior: being in school on time, submitting required reports, collecting milk money, monitoring halls and bathrooms, and serving on appropriate committees and the like. Their behavior in meeting such responsibilities can be legitimately evaluated, but such evaluations must be kept separate from evaluations of classroom performance.

. . . Teacher evaluations continue to be influenced by factors other than the performance of teaching responsibilities. Teachers may be evaluated less favorably because they are outspoken in the community, are critical of school practice, are active in union activities or for similar reasons. Similarly, evaluations may be more favorable than the teaching performance merits for reasons extraneous to effective teaching.

...The tools currently used to evaluate teachers are often superficial. Teaching is a complex act, but current evaluation tools are often checklists in which an observer notes the presence or absence of certain teacher behaviors which can be easily observed. The quest for objectivity has resulted in trivializing the complex act of teaching. The use of mandated checklists is seen by teachers as inspections, rather than evaluation.

III. The public, including parents and teachers, is generally uninformed about teacher evaluation procedures.

COMMENTS:

. . . Parents, children, and other community members should have a role in setting the goals of the school district. Teachers have an obligation to work to achieve these goals. Evaluation to determine the degree to which district goals are being achieved is appropriate.

. . . Teachers should be encouraged (or even required) to obtain evaluations from students. At the same time, we should recognize that these evaluations may be colored by the students' feeling about the teacher's subject, the teacher's grading standards, or the teacher's work requirements. Students' evaluations of teaching should go only to their teachers. Teachers should consider these evaluations carefully.

. . . All those involved in the evaluation process should be appropriately trained to fulfill their assigned role. If parents, children, and community members are to have a role in teacher evaluation, then they need to be trained as well.

IV. Evaluation is often an adversarial proceeding between teachers and administrators or between teachers and special interest groups.

COMMENTS:

. . . Evaluations which carry the possibility of negative consequences for teachers will be seen as adversarial.

"I'm a practitioner in the evaluation process...in the 'heavy' end of the deal...Teachers don't enjoy being evaluated. I don't enjoy the job as matters now stand."

. . . Mandated visits by administrators are often simply trouble-shooting gestures.

. . . Teachers need to be protected from community special interest groups who judge teachers based on rumor or bias. Community pressures sometimes influence teacher evaluation. A few parents who object to a particular assignment may unduly influence the evaluations of a specific teacher.

V. We need to reconsider who should evaluate.

COMMENTS:

. . . Currently evaluation is tied to role. Principals and supervisors, without consideration of their qualifications to be evaluators, are expected to evaluate teachers. However, teaching certain subjects, particularly at the high school level and in special classrooms, is a highly specialized activity. Some kinds of evaluations can only be performed by another specialist. Moreover, all evaluators require special skills in order to evaluate competently. All who evaluate need training to carry out this activity with competence. They need two kinds of skill. They must be masters of the content and/or method to be evaluated as well as masters of the necessary skills of evaluation.

"Criteria for an effective teacher evaluation are unclear."

"When he told me I had taught a good class, I wanted to laugh because he hasn't taught a class in twenty years."

. . . We exclude from the evaluation process some of the most important elements of teaching. Good teaching has many patterns, follows many forms. Current evaluation forms emphasize behaviors that can easily be seen and checked off. In the process, important aspects of teaching are ignored. In the end, all evaluation has to rest on judgment.

VI. Time and resources devoted to teacher evaluation are presently inadequate.

COMMENTS:

. . . Most of the burden of teacher evaluation falls on building principals. However, evaluation is only one of a principal's responsibilities.

. . . The responsibilities of the building principal are diverse and demanding. Little time is left for effective evaluation even if the principal is a competent evaluator.

. . . Since teaching is a complex set of activities, many aspects of teaching cannot be evaluated in one class period. If evaluation is to improve the teaching/learning process, then more time needs to be devoted to evaluation.

. . . Teachers should have a meaningful voice in determining the expectations for their performance. To have such a voice, teachers need time for goal setting and for establishing evaluative criteria.

VII. School districts and school buildings are different from each other. Teacher evaluation practices can and do differ from one district to another. One common model of evaluation is not appropriate. (This is not meant to dispute the many universal characteristics of good teachers and good teaching.)

COMMENTS:

. . . While all schools share objectives in common, each school district has rights of self-determination. To the degree that goals of different districts vary from one another, evaluation criteria may differ.

. . . Evaluation always takes place within a context that must be considered. Teacher evaluations should consider the physical conditions in which teachers work, class size, and the types of students with whom the teachers deal.

VIII. Teachers and administrators within most school districts have not developed a set of shared beliefs about what constitutes effective evaluation. These beliefs should be based on (1) the currently existing body of research findings on teaching and evaluation; (2) the knowledge, education, and experience of professional educators within the district; and (3) educator- and community-developed school district goals.

COMMENTS:

. . . School districts cannot continue to evaluate staff on loosely defined criteria. Assuming each district has its own autonomy and ethos, then teachers should be evaluated on district-wide goals. Perhaps some teachers can be successful in some schools and districts but not in others.

. . . Effective evaluation cannot be accomplished by reliance on classroom observation alone.

. . . Evaluation checklists and rating scales have limited value. Their use is often more destructuve than constructive.

"Let me be free to teach."

RECOMMENDATIONS

I. Every school district in New York State should establish specific plans for dramatically improving teacher compensation to be implemented by the 1988-89 school year. First attention should be given to providing adequate compensation for all teachers. Then each school district should consider ways in which the work of every teacher could be made more rewarding. Finally, districts should consider ways in which the skills of superior teachers could be further used outside regular classroom instruction, and how such extra use might be compensated.

We believe that our schools will increasingly have trouble attracting and keeping the excellent teachers that our children deserve unless we begin to pay professional teachers a professional salary. Even in the wealthy areas of our State, starting salaries of teachers do not reflect the importance of the work they are asked to do. Many current teachers are excellent even though they are poorly paid. They find their work with students rewarding and their professional activities exciting. At the same time, many excellent teachers are frustrated; they would like their work recognized in ways they find meaningful.

ACTION STEPS:

(1) Each school district in New York State should adopt a goal for a teacher starting slary in New York State by 1988. In no case should this goal be for a salary of less than $28,000. Each district should study the implications of this salary goal in terms of needed state aid as well as increased local support. Efforts should be made to enlist support of community, school administrators, legislators, Regents, and others to work to achieve this goal.

(2) Each school district in New York State should establish a mechanism which will involve teachers, school administrators, school board, and community to analyze the work of teachers in the system. This analysis should be conducted with the objective of making the work of each teacher in the system more professionally rewarding. Special attention should be given to means by which teachers will become less isolated.

(3) Each school district in New York State should consider ways in which the skills of superior teachers could be best used to improve the total school situation while keeping these superior teachers primarily in the classroom. At the same time, plans for compensating superior teachers for playing diverse roles in the system should be developed.

II. Current practices of teacher evaluation must be thoroughly re-examined. Most current evaluation practices must be changed because they are both ineffective and demeaning.

Both teachers and administrators in the Seminar agreed that the way teachers are observed most often by administrators does not help teachers do a better job. The problem of demanding that a single principal carry most of the burden of teacher observation is most severe in high schools and in special classrooms where even experienced principals may not know the subject matter that is being taught. Both teachers and administrators in the Seminar agreed that current evaluation practices seldom offer much for experienced teachers. Since teacher evaluation is only one of the many demands on the time of a principal, principals often choose to concentrate their efforts where there seems to be a problem, rather than with teachers who seem to be performing in a satisfactory or superior way. The Seminar agreed that the development of a "better" checklist is *NOT* the answer to improved teacher evaluation. All of those currently involved in teacher evaluation can be represented in a candid analysis of current evaluation procedures within a school district. Such candid analysis will result in general agreement that many current practices don't work very well and that some current practices actually harm the teaching-learning process.

"I have taught more than 17,000 classes. During that time I have been observed a total of nine times, never by a teacher colleague."

ACTION STEPS:

(1) Each school district in New York State should establish a procedure to examine current teacher evaluation practices within that district. Procedures would vary depending on many factors, but in every case, both those evaluated and those conducting current evaluations should be represented.

(a) Since procedures for assessing current practices should be designed to minimize defensiveness in an adversarial situation, the first test for each current evaluation practice should be "How does this practice improve the teaching-learning process in our school?" An effort should be made to answer this question honestly from the standpoint of all involved. Discussions might be arranged across schools and might be facilitated by individuals who are not involved in the current procedures. Adequate time and facilities should be provided for those involved in the process. This process should not be viewed as an "after school" activity, but as integral to the district's functions.

III. Put value into teacher evaluation for teachers as well as administrators.

The Seminar roundly agreed that current practices of teacher evaluation are ineffective and unacceptable; it was unable to locate any single system or plan for

teacher evaluation strong enough to respond to the needs of all teachers and administrators as well as the public. Current practices seldom offer much for the experienced teacher. This condition has evolved as a result of profound misunderstandings about teachers, teaching, and professional evaluation.

In order to improve this condition, the Seminar recommends that the emphasis in teacher evaluation be shifted away from accountability and toward the professional development of teachers. All trustworthy evidence that the Seminar is aware of demonstrates that effective evaluation practices require that those who participate in the process share a common core of beliefs about what they are doing and why they are doing it. In the absence of such a shared set of beliefs, evaluation systems lack a solid foundation.

ACTION STEPS:

(1) Each district should establish a meaningful district-wide policy on professional evaluation by instituting a professional seminar designed to do so. Consciously competent teachers should design and direct that seminar and take leadership in composing and installing district policy on teacher evaluation.

(2) Each district should identify a cadre of consciously competent teachers who will be trained as teacher evaluation specialists. The district should establish the resources and evaluation training structures required by district policy.

(3) Each district should ensure that trained teachers who perform evaluations are not required to do so as an added responsibility, but as a portion of their professional day, and that they receive appropriate meaningful compensation.

(4) Each district should identify useful evaluation supports available in teacher centers, Boards of Cooperative Educational Services, colleges, and universities and use them as necessary to assist teachers in the implementation of professional teacher evaluation practices.

IV. Get better data on teachers and teaching so that decisions will not be made on faulty information.

Since teaching is a complex process, evaluations of teachers and their teaching must acknowledge that complexity. The Seminar was fully persuaded that neither a teacher nor the activity of teaching can be meaningfully evaluated solely on a series of classroom observations or investigations.

The Seminar was equally agreed that the use of student scores on standardized tests as evidence for or against a judgment of teacher effectiveness represents a principal error in policy and practice. So many factors that are outside the control of even the best teacher contribute to student test performance that to hold teachers responsible for student failure or to reward them for success on such tests is both logically and scientifically absurd. Teachers cannot be held responsible for their students' test scores; however, teachers can and should be evaluated on *how* they require their students to spend instructional time.

Any proposed evaluation process ought to reflect current trustworthy research on effective teaching. Written policies and procedures for teacher evaluation must be based on an understanding of such research as well as the criteria and standards that local district teachers have established. Within these policies and practices specially trained local teachers will take leadership in instituting meaningful teacher evaluation.

The Seminar concluded that effective teacher evaluation, no matter the district, will require the careful, professional use of more than one method for collecting different kinds of data about teaching. Four of the more important methods are self-evaluation, peer review, systematic observation, and student ratings. Each of these methods is well described in the available professional literature.

ACTION STEPS:

(1) Each school district in New York State shall carefully define the role that teachers, administrators, students, parents, and community members will play in the evaluation process. Expert advice should be sought concerning the evaluation skills and understandings necessary for each role in the evaluation process.

(2) Necessary training for the designated evaluators should be arranged. Help in training may be available from Teacher Centers, BOCES, from universities or from qualified professionals within the district. Only after training has been received, should individuals be allowed to take part in any evaluation that will become part of a teacher's record.

(3) Time to carry out the agreed-upon evaluation activities must be scheduled within the regular workload of those involved. Teachers who take a role in peer evaluation will need time for pre-conference goal setting, for a meaningful amount of classroom observation, and for post-observation discussion.

V. Teachers must begin to evaluate other teachers on a regular basis using systematic peer review and assume major responsibility for evaluation

Most teaching occurs behind closed doors that exclude not only parents but other teachers. In only a few schools is it common to find teachers observing each other's classes. As described by Daniel Lortie, teaching is a strange profession that works in a cellular, privatistic, and conservative environment called the classroom. The Select Seminar on Teacher Evaluation strongly recommends that the profession begin to change this structure of cellularity through frequent, informal peer reviews among teachers. Such reviews ought to be focused on teachers helping each other identify their strengths and weaknesses. The results of peer reviews must not become matters of record, but the frequency with which they occur should be recorded.

The teacher's basic duties, assignments, and responsibilities, can be evaluated by administrators. Evaluating the activities of teaching, however, is a comprehensive and on-going process that can best be conducted by trained professionals closest to the process of teaching.

Most workers, whether laborers, craftsmen, professionals, managers or businessmen, have continuing opportunities to observe the work of others who are engaged in a similar activity, and their work in turn is continually observed and evaluated by others. Craftsmen do not observe only their own work. Lawyers do not read only their own briefs. Businessmen must keep an eye on the work of their competition. But teachers rarely have opportunities to observe teaching and to be observed by teachers in a non-threatening, professional manner. Typically the evaluation that matters most is a self-evaluation based upon self-observation. This feature is almost unique to teaching and is to a large extent responsible for the complexity associated with teacher evaluation. The natural human tendency

to ignore criticism, to resist change, and to be self-satisfied is thus encouraged by a structure which denies the teacher access to trustworthy professional opinions. Teaching is an isolated and isolating activity. The few evaluations that the teacher typically receives are likely to be inspections designed to ascertain whether anything is wrong. Such evaluations are necessarily threatening and are generally viewed as something to get through.

Any effective evaluation program must guarantee opportunities for continuing teacher interaction based upon *shared* classroom experiences. Teachers should be scheduled to observe and be observed as part of their instructional day. This must not be an add-on responsibility. Such structured interaction might replace scheduled non-instructional duties and as such would make more profitable use of a teacher's time. Conference time should also be scheduled as part of the teacher's instructional duties.

Evaluation processes must be consistent from one application to another. They must be carried out by educators who know what they are doing when they are evaluating teaching and who can do so objectively. To assure uniform evaluations, each school district must publish its own policy and guidelines for its teacher evaluation process, and these policies and guidelines must be developed in collaboration with teachers.

ACTION STEPS:

The teacher's own evaluation is a natural outcome of the evaluation process and is therefore the ultimate purpose of any attempt to judge the merit of a teacher's performance. Through encouraging and providing opportunities for self-examination, a school district acknowledges the differing needs of teachers at various career stages and helps a teacher become a consciously competent practitioner whose skills—continually being developed, enhanced, and refined—not only benefit students but also contribute to personal growth. The increased self-knowledge and feelings of self-worth that can result from a teacher's self-evaluation against some standards considered meaningful and valid might do much to reduce the burn-out syndrome among teachers. It might even lessen the frequency with which some of our most promising colleagues abandon the classroom in an attempt to find a profession where their work is valued and their self-respect nurtured.

Using the information received from others who have a role in an evaluation, students, colleagues, supervisors, and administrators who have first-hand knowledge of teaching, the professional teacher is better able to measure performance against his/her professional goals.

No less important in this process is the personal reflection on teaching that the teacher engages in all the time. The area between an ideal conception of self as teacher and the reality of work as revealed by self-examination and information from others forms a basis for goals that the teacher can devise for the short and long term. Specifically, the teacher might draw up a statement of goals for the coming week, month, semester, or school year.

As part of a district's formal evaluation process, these goals would be shared with an administrator along with a plan for meeting them and an indication of how the teacher woud know that the goals had been met. In all cases, the goals should be focused and limited in number. Such personal goal-setting and the

concomitant direct activity by the teacher to achieve the goals make explicit the teacher's role as primary orchestrator of personal and professional growth. At the same time and just as importantly, *it takes evaluation out of the realm of something done* ***to*** *the teacher and places it squarely in the arena of something the teacher* ***must do for*** *self.* It also makes explicit the idea that the need to strive for excellence extends beyond the point at which a tenure decision is confirmed. The rewards in enhanced self-worth and self-respect, not to mention in continually improved teaching, make self-evaluation a powerful element in the evaluation process.

(1) Teachers should have time, a regular part of their schedule, to observe colleagues teaching, to be observed by colleagues, and to confer about the observations.

(2) Workshops in classroom observation should be routinely scheduled and required of all new staff at all levels.

(3) The only record of such observation and feedback should be documentation that the observation took place. No record of teacher discussion should be kept. Formats for observation should be developed by teachers.

VI. Start evaluating teachers right at the beginning of their training programs and continue that process throughout their careers. Differentiate evaluation, both in substance and process, for subsequent career stages.

ACTION STEPS:

(1) Evaluate pre-service education, including:
   a) Student teaching as well as academic and professional courses.
   b) Performance on tests in the discipline and in literacy skills.
   c) Selection of cooperating teachers who are established in both teaching methods and the discipline in question.
   d) Frequent informal reviews carried out by many different individuals in addition to the college supervisor and the cooperating teacher.
   e) A final formal evaluation patterned after the year-end evaluation of the beginning teacher.

(2) Evaluate the beginning teacher (first two years of teaching), including:
   a) Pre-school workshop (at least five days) in which first year and other key people involved in evaluation, will discuss goals, guidelines, and expectations.
   b) Provision of a reduced first-year workload to provide time to visit the classes of other teachers, confer with other teachers, work on curriculum or engage in other relevant professional activities.
   c) Establishment of a procedure by which master teachers and/or peer teachers will have time allocated to them to visit frequently the classes of beginning teachers and to hold pre- and post-visit conferences.

d) Early emphasis on informal evaluat.ons (peer reviews) which will concentrate on the positive elements of the beginning teacher's performance, along with elements which the beginning teacher selects for emphasis.

e) Prior to any formal evaluation, a summing-up conference in which the beginning teacher is encouraged to evaluate his or her own performance and to describe any elements (positive or negative) which may be affecting performance. Those who have observed the beginning teacher will provide information. An effort will be made to reach agreement concerning the professional goals which should be of immediate concern.

f) The first formal evaluation toward the end of the first semester which should include a pre-conference in which specific goals are mutually agreed upon by the beginning teacher and those who will be evaluating; an agreement on the body of work to be evaluated, the number of observations, and the extent of other evidence that will be considered; a follow-up conference in which items of concern will be discussed, and efforts made to reach consensus concerning what was observed and its relevance to good teaching (contextual elements such as physical conditions in the school, class size, students with special problems should be discussed); a written report based on the follow-up conference which should only incorporate items discussed in the follow-up conference.

g) Second semester procedures paralleling those of the first semester: a period of extensive informal evaluation followed by a second formal evaluation.

h) An end-of-year evaluation in which the beginning teacher might introduce student evaluations, test data or other relevant information; formal evaluations will be reviewed; other elements of the beginning teacher's performance will be discussed.

i) A recommendation based on the end-of-year evaluation

j) Full teaching loads for second year teachers, but the same process otherwise as for first year teacher.

(3) Evaluate the non-tenured teacher (third year of service), including:

a) Informal observations, using the same procedures as for the beginning teacher, during the first semester.

b) Second semester and end-of-the-year procedures like those for the beginning teacher.

(4) Evaluate the tenured teacher, including:

a) Focus of evaluation on the tenured teacher's success in meeting new district, building, and/or department goals.

b) Emphasis on many informal observations, with pre- and post-conferences to establish specific evaluation goals and to discuss performance relative to these goals.

c) End-of-year summary conference involving self-evaluation and feedback from those involved in the evaluation process.

(5) Evaluation of tenured teachers who may not currently be teaching effectively.

a) Through processes of informal evaluation, questions may be raised concerning whether a tenured teacher is still performing in a satisfactory way. This concern should be communicated, with emphasis on how the teacher can be helped. Help might include providing help with specific teaching techniques, arranging personal counseling, or arranging sick leave.

b) After an agreed upon period of help, the procedures for the evaluation of the non-tenured teacher will be followed. An end-of-the-year summary conference will be held in which a decision will be reached concerning whether to return to the regular evaluation procedures for tenured teacher or to continue using formal evaluation.

VII. Each school district in New York State should institute a system for insuring that its teacher evaluation system makes use of the best and most current results of research on both teacher evaluation and effective teaching. At the same time, districts should institute systematic procedures for determining annually the effectiveness of district-wide evaluation policy and practices.

Although we don't know everything we would like to know about how to teach effectively, the Seminar was agreed that we know more than most evaluation systems currently make use of. The research base supporting effective teaching practice is considerable and has grown steadily over the last ten years. No longer is it professionally reasonable to claim that research on teaching is unavailable, inapplicable, and non-prescriptive. To hold such a view today is to be ignorant of the professional literature on effective teaching.

The findings from this research base are not, however, intended to be viewed as laws that ought to govern the practice of all professional teachers. The burden for professional teachers is not only to be constantly cognizant of that research base, but also to adopt and adapt from it those results that best fit the role and style of the individual teacher within the larger pattern of district goals in a local context.

Systematic, professional evaluation is expensive, but the Seminar believes that such an allocation of resources will prove worth the price for all parties.

ACTION STEPS:

(1) Under the direction of local district teachers and using external advisors as teachers believe necessary, each district should develop a plan for re-evaluating its teacher evaluation system, its methods, analyses, reporting strategies, and utility.

(2) The New York State Department of Education should convene immediately a statewide seminar directed and constructed by professional district-level teachers to discuss the criteria, standards, and methods that ought to be used at the local level to evaluate local systems of teacher evaluation and to ensure that such systems are responsive to the best current thinking and research on effective teaching practice as well as effective teacher evaluation practices.

VIII. Not less than three per cent of each school budget should be devoted to teacher evaluation and staff development.

The Seminar is totally committed to the idea that professional teachers *must* be professionally evaluated. To do so will cost money. Local districts with support from the State must set aside sufficient funds to support meaningful professional evaluation of staff at all levels of the district. Such evaluations must be designed to inform the public about the effectiveness and efficiency of its educators and to help educators grow in their capacity to serve children.

Presently, inadequate funds are allotted to the improvement of teaching by educational budgets.

Businesses and industry constantly engage in product analysis and product development to remain competitive and current. Education must also be willing to analyze itself and encourage new techniques.

ACTION STEPS:

(1) The State Education Department should create categorical aid for staff development and in-service education as follows:

1986-87—1% of each school district's budget
1987-88—2% of each school district's budget
1988-89—3% of each school district's budget

POSTSCRIPT

What The Select Seminar on Teacher Evaluation discovered was that the process of conducting these deliberations is just as important as the reports that were generated. We concluded that the processes that led to the Seminar and the rubric of professional respect under which it was conducted are, themselves, preconditions to the development of good evaluation policy. School districts and State agencies would do well to imitate the actions of The Select Seminar on Teacher Evaluation.